

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

February 7, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairperson, D. Chambers.

MEMBERS PRESENT: D. Chambers, J. Hilt, L. Spataro, T. Bosma, T. Russo, L. Cole,
A. Medema

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: B. Lazor, H.Griffith, B. Moore

OTHERS PRESENT: H. Brandel, 1433 Clinton; M. Ortiz, 1158 Walnut Grove.

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCTION

The new members were introduced and welcomed to the commission.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

L. Spataro went over the process of election of officers.

A motion to elect D. Chambers as Chairperson, was made by T. Bosma, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved.

A motion to elect T. Bosma as Vice-Chair, was made by D. Chambers, supported by L. Cole and unanimously approved.

WALK-ON

A motion to accept Case 2003-05 as a walk-on, was made by A. Medema, supported by T. Russo and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 7, 2003, was made by J. Hilt, supported by L. Spataro and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS/PUBLIC HEARINGS

Case 2003-02: Applicant: Henry Brandel; 1433 Clinton; District: Clinton-Peck; Class: A. Request to install ramp, deck, and door. B. Lazor presented the staff report. Applicant wishes to install two wooden wheelchair ramps, a deck, a concrete pad, and a new door. A former door that has been closed off will be reopened in the back of the house and a new 36" steel door will be put in place as seen in supplied drawing. An approximately 10' X 20', 32" high deck, will be constructed in the rear of the house as seen in the accompanying drawing. The applicant shows

that there will be two wheelchair ramps exiting the side and rear of the house converging on a new 4' square cement pad. The existing fence will be removed to accommodate this. Applicant states that two ramps are needed because of the fire code. The photos show that the spindles and hand railing of the ramps will match the look of the deck in the supplied photos. The photographs show square spindles along with square hand railings. Applicant needs to have wheelchair ramps for access and safety in this Adult Foster Care Home. In general the proposed construction of the ramp along the side of the house will not create a detrimental visual impact to the house from the street. The rear ramp and deck do not look like they will be readily visible from the street. The supplied information on the new steel door generally conforms to HDC guidelines. In general, the proposed construction appears to conform to HDC design guidelines, and removal of such construction in the future would not degrade the structure, therefore staff recommends approval. Staff has supplied illustrations for appropriate railing, and under decking materials to the commission members.

H. Brandel gave an overview of what he would like to do. This home is an AFC home. They had not had a need for handicap access in the past. They will be getting a client that is in a wheelchair and would need this access. L. Spataro asked how long they had been licensed. H. Brandel stated that it had been about 3 years or more. L. Spataro asked who owned the home. H. Brandel stated that he and his wife do. T. Bosma stated that according to the drawing, it looked as if both the proposed ramps would exit to the same pad. He would prefer to see each of the ramps being as short as possible, but meet the building code requirements. H. Brandel stated that he wasn't sure where the pad would be exactly. T. Bosma asked how high the ramp would be. H. Brandel stated that it would be 30 in. high. D. Chambers added that this area for the proposed ramp is obscure from the street and would be a good location for the ramps.

A motion that the construction of the two wheelchair ramps, deck, cement pad, installation of door and removal of fence be approve per submitted details with the following conditions: 1) The spindles, handrails, and under decking materials shall conform to the supplied design guidelines. 2) The wood construction materials shall be (painted/stained/sealed) to match/contrast the home. was made by L. Cole, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved.

Case 2003-03: Applicant: James Gebolys; 621 Western Avenue; District: Clay-Western; Class: AA. Request to install windows, door and trim. B. Lazor presented the staff report. Applicant wishes to replace five formerly glass block windows with five Kawneer aluminum framed (anodized bronze) windows that have clear glass and colonial muntins (divided lights). Applicant also wishes to replace the club door in the front room that faces onto Western Avenue. Currently the door appears to be steel with a small window. The request is to install a glass door and to match it with the look of the windows with the colonial muntins (although the applicant states that the door can be had without the muntins). Surrounding the door to finish off the area, the applicant will use Ag-Co laminated plywood covered with a medium density popcorn spray that visually resembles a stucco like material. The next request is to replace the deteriorating bottom bricks of the building along the 7th street side. The applicant will replace the bricks with limestone that matches the Western Avenue side in texture, finish and color. Applicant wishes to revitalize the building by removing the glass block windows and replacing them with new windows. This will greatly enhance the visual appearance of the building and the new windows will visually match the windows on the upper story previously approved by the HDC. The new door will also visually enhance the structure and open up the building to the street. Staff suggests not to install the colonial muntins on the door in order to meet HDC guidelines and to keep with the style of other front doors along the street and the one next door. The brick along the 7th street side of the building is in disrepair and matching the limestone on the front of the building will continue to enhance the building's appearance and longevity. Staff recommends approval of the

project per submitted details as long as the new windows and door match their existing openings. FYI: The Eagle's have applied for a Façade Improvement Grant from the Arts and Entertainment District and have received it.

T. Bosma is the architect for this project and will abstain from voting. He stated that they had already replaced the 2nd story windows last year. He stated and pointed out which windows would be replaced on the Western Ave. and 7th St sides of the building along with a door on the Western Ave. side. There would also be some tuck pointing done to repair the masonry. D. Chambers asked about the windows that were marked "No". T. Bosma stated that those would be brought back for approval at a later date when there are funds available for them to be replaced.

A motion that the replacement of the five windows along the Western Avenue and 7th Street fronts as indicated on the supplied drawing and proposal sheet, the front door and accompanying finish work, and the installation of the new limestone base along 7th Street be approved per submitted details with the following conditions: 1) The new windows and door must match existing openings. 2) The front door shall not contain muntins (divided lights), was made by J. Hilt, supported by L. Spataro and approved with T. Bosma abstaining.

Walk on – Case 2003-05: Applicant: Millie Ortiz; 1077 Pine; Request to move house into historic district. M. Ortiz stated that she had purchased the home last August. The home had been on the demolition list. She would like to move the home into an historic district and has been discussing this possibility with B. Moore. She was interested in moving the home to a lot on W. Muskegon Ave. across from Nelson Place Apts. She has estimates from the house mover already. L. Spataro stated that there has been discussion regarding assistance to help move a couple of homes currently as there have been 2 people requesting this so far. The City Commission is aware and has agreed to this with certain criteria that would have to be met. B. Moore gave an overview of the proposed plan that would be going before City Commission for approval. The lots in a target area of an historic district would be sold for \$1,000. The homes that would be moved to the target area would have to be an historic home and would need to meet criteria to show this. They would get tree trimming, roadblocks, and police assistance free of charge during the moving process. The water and sewer hook-ups would have to be paid by the owner.

L. Spataro stated that he is torn when it comes to creating a "hole" in 1 block to fill another. At the same time, he would rather see a house saved rather than torn down. T. Bosma stated that he would prefer to see the block being filled from where the last house was placed and filled in headed north along W. Muskegon Ave. He wouldn't want to see houses going in and leaving vacant lots in-between each house. Once the homes are moved, the exterior rehabilitation would need to go before the HDC for approval. B. Moore stated that there is a time line that would have to be followed for the exterior repairs of 18 months.

A motion to approve the moving of the home located at 1077 Pine to a vacant lot in the historic district along W. Muskegon Ave., was made by T. Russo, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Goal Setting – L. Spataro stated that the commission members should look at their goals again, possibly at the March meeting.

HDC and Downtown Development – B. Moore stated she has heard different viewpoints regarding the Mall. One is that the mall should be leveled and all new development be placed there. Another is that some of the structures in the mall shouldn't be demolished. Something that could be considered is to create individual historic districts protecting certain buildings in the mall. The 20% federal tax credit may also be significant to the developer. The entire mall area could also be placed in an historic district to provide some design review for new structures. L. Spataro stated that it might be appropriate to present the idea to the Charter Development. Douglas Bock is a Senior Partner of Charter Development. They see the downtown area as being from where Fisherman's Landing currently is to where it is going to be moved. Charter Development would like the development of the Mall to tie in with what is located downtown. They may be interested in incentives if they were to keep some of the older buildings. There should be dialogue with the developer before these ideas are considered.

T. Russo asked who would get this process started. D. Chambers stated that it would be the HDC. They would have to look at each structure and make a determination. B. Moore added that the HDC would be making a recommendation to the City Commission and if they agree, it would then go to the State for consideration. T. Bosma stated that this is a great idea, but he doesn't think that the entire area should be an historic district. This could create problems for development. They should only look at saving what is significant. D. Chambers stated that the older buildings could spur the development. The Charter Development would have to go before the Planning Commission for a PUD once they are ready to proceed. L. Spataro stated that a seed would be planted regarding the historic district designation with representatives of Charter Development.

502 W Webster – B. Moore stated that this case is going before the Planning Commission on February 13. The applicant is requesting a special use permit for a Bed and Breakfast. The home would have to be owner occupied in order for the Planning Commission to approve this. She is asking the HDC members if they have any questions or concerns with this since it is located in an historic district. D. Chambers stated that he lives in this area and there are already 2 Bed and Breakfasts in the area. One of the existing establishments isn't owner occupied. There really isn't a need for another one. A. Medema asked how the property is zoned. B. Moore stated that it is in an "H" (Heritage) zoning district. Due to the zoning, it is required to be viewed on a case by case basis. T. Russo asked where the parking for this would be. B. Moore stated that it would be something that would have to be determined by the Planning Commission. L. Spataro stated that the HDC would like to see this brought before them also. B. Moore stated that she would add a condition of "pending HDC approval" should the Planning Commission approve.

L. Spataro discussed the Emery House. The house is in need of repair. He gave a description of some of the things that are missing and deteriorating on the home.

850 Wood – B. Lazor stated that this is a home that CNS had rehabilitated. W. Griffin, Director of CNS, would like a letter from the HDC supporting this project so they may be able to get an award for it. L. Spataro stated that the home used to be boarded up and painted white. The house looked like it should have been demolished. Once the paint was stripped, they found that there was brick underneath. There are only a couple of homes in the City that are Gothic and this is one of the homes. Unfortunately, this isn't in an historic district. He would support this.

A motion to have D. Chambers sign a letter of support for the rehabilitation of 850 Wood St, was made by L. Spataro, supported by T. Russo and unanimously approved.

619 Amity – There had been some discussion regarding this home. There is someone interested in purchasing this home and rehabilitating it. There may be some historic significance to the home. The gentleman who is interested in purchasing the home would also like to have it moved to an historic district.

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

hmg
02/07/03

“We admire that which is old not because it is old, but because it is beautiful.”
Winston Churchill